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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 007813

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/16/2015

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [FR](#) [HA](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: FRENCH RELUCTANT TO DEPLOY EU GENDARMERIE TO HAITI
AT THIS TIME

REF: STATE 206172

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary and Comment: The French are reluctant to send the EU Gendarmerie to Haiti in support of upcoming elections for a number of reasons. The primary concern they cite is that the EU Gendarmerie is not yet ready to deploy, and won't be until sometime in 2006. Additionally, the GoF is worried that the situation in Haiti might prove too challenging for a fledgling force, and that a failure on the first mission would be disastrous for the future of the program. The French also seek international cover for any such mission and are hesitant to send troops without a direct request from the UN. Finally, the GoF believes that any EU Gendarmerie deployment would rely heavily on French manpower, and the unrest that has plagued France the last three weeks has tied up most available personnel. While the situation has returned to relative normalcy, the underlying tension remains, and the French are averse to committing troops to international duty while there is still a possibility for trouble at home. Ultimately, it seems unlikely the French will engage in Haiti without U.S. participation. End Summary and Comment.

12. (C) In a discussion November 16 with PolMinCouns, MFA A/S-equivalent for WHA Daniel Parfait stated that the GoF had examined deploying the EU Gendarmerie to Haiti in June and July of 2005, but ultimately dismissed the possibility due to resistance on a number of fronts. First, Parfait indicated that the EU Gendarmerie would not be ready until 2006. Second, Parfait expressed the fear that the situation in Haiti might prove a difficult challenge for the fledgling force, and that problems on the inaugural mission would damage the future of the EU Gendarmerie. Although security in Haiti is improved compared to the summer, Parfait elaborated, the gangs and arms remain, and both could easily reemerge during elections to derail the process. Parfait expressed concern that Aristide supporters might unite behind the candidacy of former president Renee Preval in the hopes of paving the way for Aristide's return or another virtual Aristide presidency. Any electoral result could touch off violence, Parfait speculated, but while the GoF was concerned, he said there was not yet enough impetus to engage French troops. In the end, in the face of possible widescale violence, such a deployment of French forces (vice European gendarmes) might be possible, Parfait entertained, if the U.S. were also involved.

13. (C) Post also delivered reftel points to Alexis Morel, MFA Counselor in the Directorate for Strategic Affairs (ASD) covering EU Gendarmerie issues. Morel indicated to PolOff that the GoF was still evaluating our request, but that the general mood or reaction to our proposal was one of "skepticism." Morel echoed Parfait's concern that the EU Gendarmerie was not yet operational. He added that the situation in Haiti remained uncertain, raising the question among some in the GoF as to whether the Haitians would be able to hold elections under the current timeframe. Morel, too, noted that the extent to which the U.S. would be involved in election security was a key factor; he suggested that French participation was likely to be influenced by whether or not U.S. security personnel also were deployed.

14. (C) On November 15, Deputy PolCouns and PolOff presented reftel points to MFA DAS-equivalent for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean Pierre-Alain Coffinier, Haiti Desk Officer Cecile Merle, and UN Desk Officer for Haiti Benoit Guidee. Coffinier stated that there was political reluctance to send troops to Haiti, and Guidee questioned whether DPKO was in favor of additional support or would be able to coordinate that support with existing forces. According to Guidee, the issue was a non-starter for France absent an explicit request from the Secretariat of the UN, with a recommendation from DPKO. His impression was that DPKO had not yet been consulted, or was in any case not engaged.

15. (C) Guidee indicated that troop availability was also an issue, as any early deployment of the European Gendarmerie Force (EGF) would require French gendarmes to take the lead and bear a disproportionate burden (given the lack of Francophones in other EU member states). Moreover, 81 French gendarmes and police were already engaged in Haiti through MINUSTAH. Asked about a possible ad hoc coalition formed

from the gendarmes of five EU countries, Guidee responded that the GoF had earlier considered, but then rejected, this idea.

16. (C) Guidee saw few prospects for GoF flexibility, concluding that French participation would be difficult to sell politically to the GoF in any case, given that French gendarmes were currently needed in France to combat the wave of civil unrest that has plagued the country for three weeks. Please visit Paris' Classified Website at:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.cfm>

Stapleton